

# 'Blood & Concrete' is a brooding subterranean masterpiece

by Daniel W. Duffy

"If you tipped America to one side, all the loose pieces would fall to L.A.," is the disjunctive yet hilarious premise behind the low-budget *Blood & Concrete: A Love Story*. The story revolves around a two-bit car thief and his dark misadventures in Los Angeles.

Billy Zane (*Dead Calm*, *Memphis Belle*) stars as Joey Turks, a hoodlum that is so obsessed with getting out of the greater Los Angeles area, he'll do anything it takes. The story starts off with Zane suffering a flesh wound while trying to steal a television set from some guy named Mort and consequently, after losing several pints of blood, he runs into his soon-to-be love interest, the psychopathic Mona (Jennifer Beals) in a cemetery. The rest of his looney adventures include run-ins with a crazed cop, an aphrodisiac and a Right Said Fred clone (I'm too sexy for this flick, so sexy that it's sick), among many other flavorful characters and "Outer Limits" occurrences.

"When you're closest to death is when you feel most alive," is a line from *Concrete* that epitomizes the entire film's obsession with death. The dark humor of the film looks at mortality in a painfully funny manner. *Heathers* supporters will be out in full force to support this unusual look at life in Los Angeles.

The film has an interest-

## MOVIE REVIEW

### Blood & Concrete (★★★★)

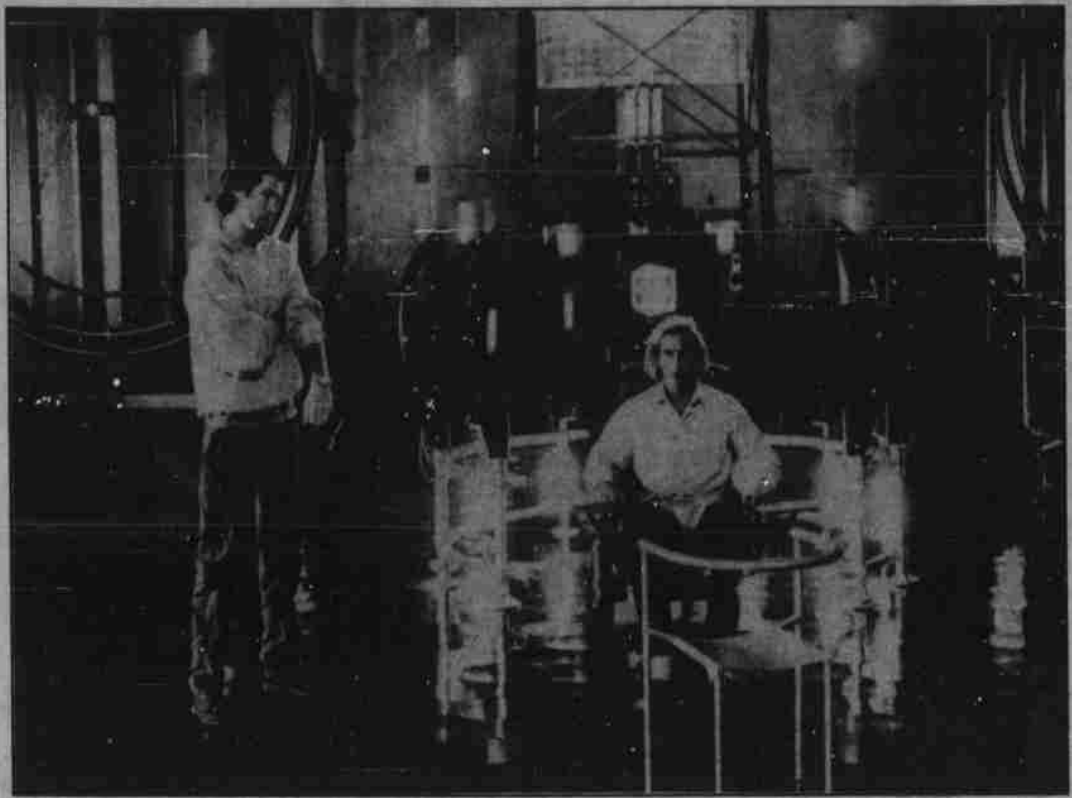
Starring Billy Zane, Jennifer Beals and Darren McGavin. Directed by Jeffrey Reiner.

ing trashy look that lures the viewer in. It's everything the art direction of *The Dark Backward* wanted to be. Also, *Concrete* makes use of many heavily-saturated deep-blue swimming pool scenes that evoke a strange resounding feeling in the viewer.

The relationship between Beals and Zane needed more exploration and Darren McGavin's Detective Dick was all wrong, but these are the only real flaws in the film.

Zane is charismatic as the dense but likeable hooligan, and bears a certain resemblance to a young Marlon Brando. Beals hasn't done much since her *Flashdance* days, but she is perfect as the tenebrous nymphomaniac in this film. Beals also marks her singing debut in this "love story." She sings an amazing tune, "One Girl in a Million" (with an all-Sprockets back-up band) that parallels the impact of Modern English's "I Melt With You" from *Valley Girl*, but in a twisted sort of way.

The finest performance though, is turned in by James LeGros as Beals' ex-beau Lance, a rebel rock singer without a clue. It's starting to sound like all the characters in this film are a bunch of yahoos, and basically they are, but they're all endearing in a witless kind of way.



Jeff Fahey (r), nappy lid and all, stars with Pierce Brosnan in the virtual reality of *The Lawnmower Man*.

# Good intentions outweighed by virtual reality in 'Lawnmower Man'

by Robert Hollowood

## MOVIE REVIEW

### The Lawnmower Man (★★½)

Starring Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan. Directed by Brett Leonard.

Stephen King's *The Lawnmower Man* is the tale of Jobe Smith, a man with the mind of a boy who is used in virtual reality experiments by a doctor whose lawns he mows.

Jobe, played convincingly by Jeff Fahey, is a lowly man in his '20s who lives in a small shack behind a church working as a handyman and cutting lawns. Due to Jobe's lack of intelligence, people disdain and often take advantage of him.

This is where Dr. Angelo (Pierce Brosnan) can help Jobe while taking advantage of him as well. The experiments he has been doing with chimpanzees at his corporately-funded lab promise to make Jobe smarter and this

is where the story really starts. Director Brett Leonard balances nifty special effects, mostly computer generated, with the reality of Jobe's gain in knowledge. Aside from a slow beginning, the story is compelling enough to keep you interested and leave you entertained, but it also leaves you thinking that this story could have been more than it ends up to be.

Brosnan rants on and on about how virtual reality will change the world, but all this film ends up saying is that corporations are comprised of evil war mongers. Also included are

far-off looks when the characters start to discuss the underlying ethics that this movie suggests, but never follows through with. The idea is actually nobler than the script by Brett Leonard and Gimmel Everett allow it to be, as it settles for over-used plot gimmicks instead of building on their solid idea.

The ending is stock and tidy as it is with most movies of this nature. It includes the now almost annoying hint of sequels that seem to pop up at the end of so many films.

King's name on the title is a good gimmick to make money, but will not necessarily draw King fans due to a 30-second television commercial which reveals the plot to be far from the three page *The Lawnmower Man* short story.

## ART HOUSE

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lavish ads of the major chains around town.

Lesh's solution to this is to send out flyers for upcoming films.

"It's a waste of time to run art if you don't do mailings and programs," Lesh said, "the key is to let them know what you've got."

Mountain View Cinema offers a service which allows anyone to call the theater and leave their name and address and they'll be put on the mailing list for upcoming films.

Films to look for in the near future at these two theaters are *High Heels* and *The Double Life of Veronique* at the Paradise and *Let Him Have It* and the film *Hearts of Darkness* which is a documentary on

the making of the Francis Ford Coppola epic, *Apocalypse Now*, at the Mountain View.

The future of the art-house theaters in Las Vegas is now in the hands of the public. Without community support, these houses will not last, because they are, first and foremost, businesses.

"In business anymore, its got to be fun," Lesh said. "But if I'm not making money, I'm not going to stay in it. It's not a charity, I wish it were, but it's not."

The Mountain View charges students with a UNLV ID \$3.50 for all shows and the Paradise 6 charges \$3.50 for all shows before 6 p.m.

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